

Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging Agenda

Regular Meeting

October 14, 2021 - 01:00 PM

Online meeting

Members : Thomas Weist (Secretary), Florence Castner, Janet Court, Helene Gauthier, Angelique Kingsbury, Melinda Ludwiczak, Hazel Tanner, Paulette Will, and Beth Winnick (Quorum - 4)

Staff : Christina Kendrick

Call To Order

1. Roll Call. Present were: Thomas Weist (Secretary), Janet Court, Helene Gauthier, Angelique Kingsbury, Melinda Ludwiczak, Hazel Tanner, Paulette Will,
2. Adoption of the agenda. With the change in order of business, the agenda was adopted.
3. Acceptance of minutes The minutes of the September 9 meeting were approved.

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Discussion

4. Update on Public Safety community conversations
5. Update on Minneapolis for a Lifetime
6. Committee support for Senior Linkage Line
7. Update on efforts of the city in partnership with this committee and community partners on bridging the digital divide
8. What should our work focus on in 2022

Presentation

9. Tony Sjogren from Rebuilding Together Twin Cities provided information on their programs to help older adults stay in their communities. They install grab bars, hand rails, ramps. Their primary mission is to help people stay in home longer. Rebuilding Together works around the state as well in the Metro area. It is a 501c3. There are others around the country. There is a regional office in SW Minnesota.

Their safe at home program works with a College of Saint Catherine program that does assessments. Rebuild Together provides chair risers, smoke protectors, does a total of 16 things. Bigger projects do not fit the program. They do triage assessment using 2 tools. One is living at home assessment encouraged by DHS. Client must be a home-owner and be below 50% area median income level and must be senior, disabled or one or two other qualification. Senior is over 60 for us. Volunteers do the installation. Sjogren is a certified aging in place professional,

an occupational designation. People call us and I do an assessment. Most people over 65 have house built before 1950, narrow stairs, doorways. We don't try to do everything so we can serve more people. Use of ramps is ballooning.

The biggest issue with aging in place, Sjogren said, is companionship, which we can't fix. The majority of clients are women over 75 with a disability, mental illness (depression).

Committee Member Tanner: can you widen doors? We have widened doors getting 2-3 inches. Member Ludwiczak: what do you do/refer with people who don't meet income limits? We do a sliding scale for people over the median. Some at 80% have medical bills. Member Gauthier: how do people come to you? We don't advertise. We are in area aging program and work with parish nurse programs. We don't advertise because we are busy. Most seniors (45000 in metro area) have projects that we could do. We try to talk to social worker. We don't look at wealth. Member Gauthier: is it harder to reach minority clientele? We have a committee that meets with neighborhood associations, churches in neighborhoods we know have more low income residents. We know it's a concern. A higher percentage of our clients are minorities than the general population. And that's despite lower home ownership. We don't advertise because we want our money to go to projects.

Member Will: my food shelf is in an old home in SW. It's not handicap accessible. They can't fit a ramp to the outside door. Sjogren: we see that issue, especially for larger people. We can work with that place that is a non-profit. Building codes differ between homes and commercial buildings. ADA sets differences. Sjogren will provide info to make a referral. Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is a program we work with. Rebuild is located at 280 and Como. 1030 SE 33rd Ave. Website; go to Rebuilding Minnesota Together.

Member Kingsbury: You have a core staff and volunteers? Yes. Skilled are core or volunteers? I give a 2-hour training to volunteers and talk about low income people and suspending stereotypes. We may or may not work with contractors for larger projects. We subcontract, which saves homeowner from getting ripped off. Our ramp teams have a minimum of 5 ramps experience. One team has 70. We maintain ownership of ramps, which we disassemble and repurpose. Member Kingsbury: is there a wait list? The wait time is about a month for ramps. Home repair is longer. This year we will put on about 30 roofs. The backlog is 45. Dangerous situations are expedited. Member Tanner: Do you use minority contractors? Our lead plumbing and electrical contractors are minority owned. Member Tanner: sounds like yours is a one-stop, which I am in favor of. Sjogren: Most of our applications come in hand-filled applications, typical of seniors, low income.

Member Kingsbury: is there a navigator who helps manage projects? Yes. We have project managers. What are the challenges since COVID? Obviously, in-person contact. Aging and disability are more at risk. For a while, we shut down. We insist all our staff vaccinated and hopefully homeowner. Want Homeowner out of house if not vaccinated. We lost a lot of volunteers but they are returning. Not getting as many one-day volunteers. Minneapolis Navigator program, aimed at chronically cited places, is a good program but dealing with multiple jurisdictions makes our job harder. (Staff Kendrick: I started Home Owner Navigators,

but it has limited resources.) The biggest problem is hoarders, and we have no solution. Rebuild Together doesn't deal with hoarders because can't fix the psycho-social issue. Rebuild doesn't advertise because it isn't fair to take applications that will need 2-3 years to get to job. Rural issues are much different because there are towns that are all seniors. Sjogren will send an application form. If you are making a referral for someone else, make sure we know. They want to prevent referring people getting blamed for Rebuild's mess-ups.

Staff Kendrick reported on conversations about community safety. They are still occurring (SE Asian last night) report after election.

Kendrick reported on Minneapolis for a Lifetime discussions: They are meeting Oromo and Somali elders and others soon. We're updating Minneapolis for Aging plan. Each community's elders have unique needs, e.g., SE Asian needs a funeral home (they only do burial).

Board Action: The Board discussed Committee Support for the Senior Linkage Line and a letter of support to the State Board on Aging. There was a motion (Ludwiczak, Will) to draft letter approved. Motion passed. Ludwiczak and Weist will work on letter. Kingsbury is available as well.

Update There was an update on City's efforts on bridging digital divide for elders: Members Ludwiczak and Gauthier and Staff Kendrick will meet with city (?). Discussions with Community Members and Community Senior groups (56:30), has been speaking with Member Winnick about how to do a holistic program, how to protect self from scams, how to manage accounts. They are trying to put together a program that could be offered to a variety of communities. It's obvious that the City is aware that reaching parts of the community difficult because parts not sufficiently plugged in. Work with doctors etc. All of this is in the discussion phase.

Member Will raised the issue of using Zoom for our meetings because it is easier. The City does not permit this for security reasons.

The agenda item about discussing our focus for 2022 was tabled due time.

Noting a recent hit-and-run incident involving an elderly woman on scooter, Member Will observed that we need to talk more about pedestrian safety. Member Kingsbury observed that this ties with our public safety conversation. "I say an Amen when I get in my door because it's not safe." Kingsbury talked with Senior robbed at 8th and Nicollet. Member Will: seniors targeted. Member Kingsbury: Recklessness is epidemic. Member Gauthier: we need to do something about dangerous driving. She observed a car going past cars stopped for school bus.

Very concerning. Member Kingsbury: we need more people to share stories. Member Will: There is an element of anger. I get honked at for going to slow The streets are where people take out their anger and frustration. Will hinks St Paul has done a better job. Janet: St. Paul has cops designated for pedestrian safety on busiest pedestrian routes. Is there a difference in stats for Mpls and St Paul.

Announcements

10. Any announcements from our members.

Adjournment

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Next Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging meeting: Nov 18, 2021

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